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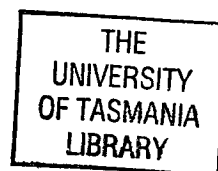
The Piccolo: A study of Australian repertoire and performance
practice

by

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Submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the Degree of
Master of Music Studies

University of Tasmania (October, 2009)



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THE PICCOLO: A STUDY OF AUSTRALIAN REPERTOIRE AND PERFORMANCE PRACTICE. (2009)

As a solo instrument the piccolo has a limited amount of original repertoire compared to other wind instruments. Its rise within solo and chamber repertoire is growing and players are now required to be equally proficient on piccolo as the flute.

This study covers aspects of playing the piccolo in relation to pre-existing flute technique, in an effort to demystify some common problems when playing the piccolo. Five key Australian works for piccolo, including *Piccolo Concerto* by Barry McKimm and *Concerto for Piccolo and Orchestra* by Michael Easton will be discussed. This paper also provides a list of Australian solo and small ensemble piccolo repertoire.

This study begins with a brief history of the piccolo and its construction in relation to changes made to the flute and the similarities and differences to be noted when playing the piccolo. It will then go on to cover piccolo practise techniques and concludes with a rehearsal guide for the selected works.

The author also conducted an interview with Mr Frederick Shade, former principal piccolo of the Melbourne Symphony Orchestra, and the commissioner of both the McKimm and Easton piccolo concertos. This interview covered a range of topics including piccolo specific techniques, issues relating directly to the Easton and McKimm concertos and Shade's experience as a piccolo player in both Orchestral and solo fields. The findings of which, are published in this document.

Two audio CD's accompany this paper: a recital of the selected works performed by the author¹, and an unedited recording project, recorded prior to the recital.

This recording project was intended to assist with various aspects of recital preparation including stamina and ensemble. This recording project gave the performer the opportunity to hear the repertoire from a different perspective, allowing the identification of problems within the playing, prior to the examination recital.

The paper will close with a summary of the areas covered.

¹ This recording is predominantly unedited, with the exception of gaps between movements and audience clapping.

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Chapter I – Piccolo history and construction

Until recently the piccolo was considered primarily to be a doubling instrument.

The piccolo first appeared in the scores of various Operas and Ballet and the turn of the 18th Century and slowly became used as an extension of the range of the upper woodwinds early in the 19th Century. During this period it evolved from a one –keyed instrument into a Boehm system instrument and became a popular virtuoso solo instrument during the 19th century.²

It was introduced into the orchestra as an instrument in its own right in Beethoven *Symphony number 5 Op. 67* in the last movement. In the score Beethoven gave the instrument its own part, not a second flute/piccolo part.

Beethoven used the piccolo in subsequent symphonic works, leading the way for other composers to begin to use the piccolo as an individual instrument, and also explore its unique timbre in works such as Berlioz *Symphonie Fantastique*, and Stravinsky *The Rite of Spring*.

There are many publications on the history and development of the flute; unfortunately there are very few that are piccolo specific. Most publications state minimal piccolo history and construction. Bate refers to the development of the piccolo as *little different from that of C flute, save that modern mechanism was applied rather later*.³

The modern flute began its life in 1847. Theobold Boehm is attributed to creating this new model of flute by dividing the instrument into three parts, changing the

²Zartouhi Dombourian-Eby, "The Piccolo in the 18th Century" (PhD diss., Michigan: UMI., Northwestern University, 1987).iii

³ Phillip Bate, *Instruments of the orchestra: The flute* (London: W.W. Norton, 1969), 183

construction of the tubing, or the 'bore' from conical, to a cylindrical body, and foot, with a parabolic head-joint.⁴

Figure 1 shows a Parabolic head-joint as made by Boehm & Mendler. The figure shows the head-joint of the flute with Boehm's' parabolic design. Lines on the left hand side of the figure depict the shapes used for the bore of the flute, highly exaggerated so that the reader can see the exact curve used. Line a through b indicating the shape of a cylindrical bore shape; a through c through d indicating a conical bore shape; and a through e through d showing a parabolic bore shape.

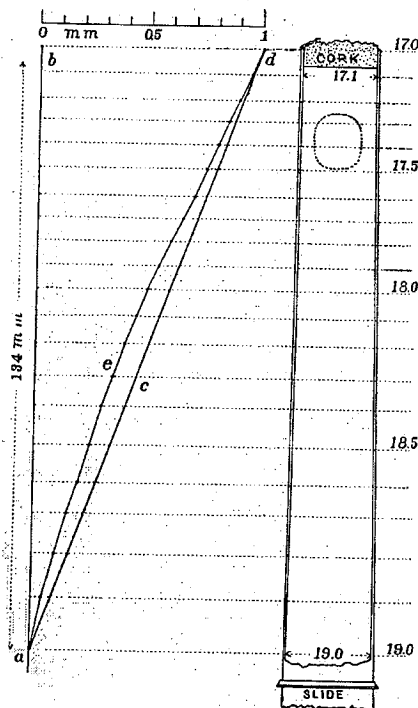


Figure 1. The Parabolic head-joint. Theobald Boehm, *The flute and flute-playing*. Pg. 18

Changing in the internal shape of the instrument had a significant effect on the intonation and breadth of sound. Boehm divided the tube according to the laws of

⁴ Jeremy Monatgu "Flute", Oxford Music Online, <http://www.oxfordmusiconline.com:80/Subscriber/article/oprt/t114/e2601> {Accessed May 12, 2009}

acoustics, not to the span of the hand, and backed up his placing of the holes with mathematical calculations.⁵

Tone hole placement is critical in order for correct intonation between the octaves. Boehm discovered that the parabolic shape of the head-joint was the most effective in order for the octaves of the instrument to be tuned.

Boehm documented his results in his treatise *The Flute and Flute Playing in Acoustical, Technical, and Artistic Aspects*, describing his reasoning for using a parabolic bore rather than cylindrical or conical as:

The most desirable proportions of the air column, that is, the dimensions of the bore best suited for bringing out the fundamental tones at various pitches, were soon found. These experiments show:

1. That the strength, as well as the full, clear quality of the fundamental tone, is proportional to the volume of the air set in vibration.
2. That a more or less important contraction in the bore of the upper part of the flute tube, and a shortening or lengthening of this contraction, have an important influence upon the production of the tones and upon the tuning of the octave.
3. That this contraction must be made in a certain geometrical proportion, which is closely approached by the curve of the parabola.⁶

⁵ James Galway *Flute*, Yehudi Menuhin *music guides* (New York: Dover Publications Inc., 1964), 41-42

⁶ Theobald Boehm, *The flute and flute-playing* trans., Dayton C. Miller (Dover Publications, Inc: New York, 1964), 17-19

In addition to the change of bore shape, Boehm also improved the key mechanism for the flute, making it possible through a lever system, to close a key further along the instrument while keeping a natural hand position, thus creating better ease of playing.

As stated previously, the piccolo is reported to be similar to the flute. The modern orchestral piccolo is in the key of C and is written in the treble clef, sounding one octave higher than written. It is less than one third the size of the concert flute, measuring at approximately 12.5 inches in length. The piccolo has a similar range as the flute, save the bottom notes.⁷ (see figure 2 and 3)



Figure 2. The Range of the Flute

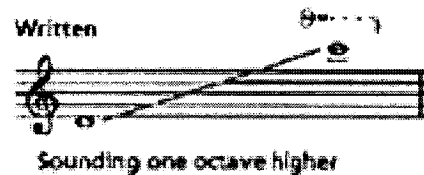


Figure 3. The Range of the Piccolo

In contrast to the flute, a cylindrical bore is common in today's piccolos, whilst the body is conical. This set-up is opposite to that of the flute (conical/parabolic head-joint with cylindrical body), importantly the set-up has a major bearing on the intonation of each instrument.

⁷ Most piccolos today reach down only to D where as a flute is capable of a B. This is due to the extra joint on the flute that the standard piccolo does not have, but which in previous years has been available to those who sought it out.

Boehm's key work mechanism has also been added to the piccolo making it easier to place the fingers in a more natural position and still close the holes on the instrument. Due to its small size, some of the keys on the piccolo have been adjusted to sit slightly off centre above the pad and the tone hole, allowing for ergonomic playing and reducing the need for the player to move individual fingers laterally in order to cover the tone holes.

In recent years there have been a number of different woods used in piccolo manufacture including grenadilla, cocus wood and rosewood. These woods are chosen due to their density and their resistance to cracking under temperature changes. The differing density of the wood used in construction, creates subtle differences in tone colour.

Most professional piccolo players use wooden piccolos as opposed to metal or resin models. A wooden piccolo is recommended because it has a wider timbral variation.⁸

In '*A survey of selected college flute teachers* published in 2005, over 81% of respondents indicated a preference for a piccolo made of wood for their students.⁹

The materials used for construction of the piccolo mechanism are silver plate and solid 925, silver in professional models.¹⁰ Manufacturers also used silver/gold plate in their premium, professional model piccolos.

As previously stated, the piccolo is much smaller than the flute and requires an

⁸ Frederick Shade, Interview by Author, Melbourne, VIC, August 28, 2009

⁹ Emily Orr, "Teaching the piccolo: A survey of selected college flute teachers" (PhD diss., University of Northern Carolina, 2005), 15

¹⁰ Solid 925 silver provides a stronger, more hard-wearing mechanism, and while results in tarnish for some people, will not flake off as seen on some silver or nickel plated models, thus proving to be more long-lasting.

adaption of hand and embouchure position in order to play with good tone control and intonation.

The lateral spread between each finger is much smaller due to the length of the piccolo. This can assist in an ease of technique whilst playing, as the finger placement does not require much spread in order to be positioned correctly over the keys. It is also a more natural position as compared to the spread required to play the flute. Likewise, due to the smaller circumference of the piccolo, the fingers do not need to move vertically as far in order to close the tone holes.¹¹

The same is also true for the embouchure formation, which must have a smaller aperture to compensate for the smaller embouchure hole on the piccolo. As a result, the placement of the instrument on the lip must be slightly higher than is required when playing the flute in order for the bottom lip not to restrict the air column. This placement assists in producing an open sound and a greater potential of embouchure flexibility for making slight pitch and tonal adjustments.

Cynthia Ellis quotes Roger Stevens, 31 year member of the Los Angeles Philharmonic who explains this concept in her article entitled *Top ten piccolo tips*;

The flute embouchure is of a size that is quite normal for the average human being: theoretically, the piccolo embouchure should be approximately half the size of the flute embouchure. Since one doesn't find little people especially designed for piccolo playing, the player's responsibility then is simply one of

¹¹ Most players progressing from flute to piccolo find this to be an advantage, as a much larger muscle movement has already been learned.

accustoming himself to playing within the limits of the compromise...Downsizing the aperture, then, would be the appropriate adjustment needed to match the smaller size of the piccolo embouchure hole.

Place the piccolo higher on the lower lip, because a piccolo is smaller than a flute. Most of us place the flute on the edge of the lower lip where the lip meets the skin, but a piccolo placed a bit higher will project the air column slightly higher onto the back wall of the blow hole.¹²

¹² Cynthia Ellis, Top ten piccolo tips, *Flute Talk* Vol. 26 Iss.6 {February 2007}:32

Chapter II. – Piccolo Practice

As players are expected to be as proficient on the piccolo as the flute, it is wise to incorporate a little piccolo practice into the daily practise routine. This chapter will cover aspects pertaining to piccolo practice and technique.

In 2005 in the United States of America, 78.5% of respondents in; *A survey of selected college flute teachers*, indicated that piccolo study was not a part of the degree work.¹³

Players new to the piccolo are often nominated to play the part if it is scored in a work, and not necessarily because they have chosen to.

When preparing repertoire for a performance, or even just general piccolo practice, Trevor Wye makes some very valid suggestions in his introduction to *A piccolo practice book*;

- It is unwise to start off your day on the piccolo like a demented banshee. Do some flute practise first to warm up the lips.
- Practise the third octave of the flute each day before your piccolo practise. Take note of the extra air speed and of how you 'hold' the smaller hole in your lips without undue tension
- If, or when your lips feel strained or tired, then stop. Don't squeeze the notes out.
- Each day will be different. When progressing from the second to the third octave, should you feel tense or strained then stop. Don't try to focus the tone too quickly. In athletics, you would run only as fast as you reasonably can; to overdo it would result in a pulled muscle. It's the same with the lips.

¹³ Emily Orr, "Teaching the piccolo", 21

- If you have a wide flute vibrato, cut it down on the piccolo unless you want to sound hysterical. Use enough vibrato to keep the tone alive. Try to keep your vibrato *within your tone*.
- Finally be conscious of your intonation. It must be the central focus of your practise. Whatever you achieve on the piccolo *it must be in tune*.¹⁴

As Wye states, it is unwise to start the practice session on the piccolo. Just as an athlete would warm up before a training session, it is suggested to start on the flute before moving to the piccolo. This assists in warming the muscles required for embouchure formation in a relaxed state, before moving on to the piccolo.

Wye then suggests to practice of the third register of the flute prior to the practice of the piccolo. This also aids in the embouchure formation, as flute players can often begin to tighten the embouchure when playing in the third register. Practising this on the flute first, with the aim to produce an open and relaxed sound, will aid in the tone practice of the piccolo.

Wye brings to the fore-front the very thing that most players forget when switching to the piccolo from the flute: Intonation.

Due to the piccolo's smaller size, the variance in pitch can be quite astounding. Even the slightest adjustment on the player's part will result in a change of pitch. This is a very important, but difficult lesson for new piccolo players to grasp, as there is a tendency to use what would be appropriate on the flute when attempting to adjust the pitch of a note. As the piccolo is smaller than the flute, so must be the adjustments made for intonation.

¹⁴ Trevor Wye and Patricia Morris, *A piccolo practice book* (Great Britain: Novello & Co:1988), 5

As previously discussed, the internal shape of the instrument also has a major effect on intonation. In an interview with Frederick Shade, former principal piccolo of the Melbourne Symphony Orchestra, Shade commented;

The design has had to be adjusted and compromised for us to play it (the piccolo). This has an effect on the instrument, and if we understand this then we will be more patient with the instrument and ourselves in that it is not me that is the root cause for those pitch problems, but it is up to me to adjust and play in tune.¹⁵

It is important to be aware of the design flaws in relation to intonation, but as a performer also to compensate for the misgivings of the instrument.

The piccolos scale or tone-hole placements have not been regularised. As a result the player must address the issue of uneven intonation across the instrument. On most modern piccolos the D and D# tend to be sharp in each octave.¹⁶

In regard to intonation practice on the piccolo, it is recommended to practise long tones with a tuner. This can be particularly helpful when adjusting to a new instrument, as all piccolos are different. This strategy gives the player time to adjust to where the placement of the notes should be in order for it to be in tune. In a survey conducted by Emily Orr, Orr states;

According to the respondents, intonation is by far the most overwhelming challenge of playing the piccolo. The most common suggestion for assistance in this area was to work slowly and carefully with a tuner.¹⁷

¹⁵ Frederick Shade, Interview, 2009

¹⁶ Trevor Wye and Patricia Morris, *A piccolo practice book*, 17

¹⁷ Emily Orr, "Teaching the piccolo", 80

Wye's comment of keeping the vibrato within the tone is important especially when considering intonation, as vibrato is a fluctuation of pitch and or intensity.¹⁸

It is very important to minimise any hint of vibrato when practicing long tones with a tuner, and also to reduce the amount of vibrato when playing the piccolo due to the smaller size of the instrument. Practicing long tones with a tuner and including vibrato in the tone will distort the pitch, particularly because due to the smaller size of the piccolo, each variation will be exaggerated.

As with the flute, there are a number of alternative fingerings available to assist in intonation. These alternative fingerings can be can be used at any time, however often tend to be the slightly awkward fingerings originally used when the mechanism of the flute was less accommodating. Such alternate fingerings include the leaving off of the right hand little finger when playing high E, and the addition of the F# key when playing middle and high C#. Both these alternate fingerings can assist in bringing the pitch down slightly on what are considered sharper notes on the instrument.

It is important however, to be aware that some alternate fingering's can be detrimental tone clarity, and should be used with discretion, always keeping intonation the main objective.¹⁹

Shade comments that he does not frequently use alternate fingerings. He states that he "requires his students to be able to play in tune with the standard fingerings, as some trill [alternate] fingerings tend to get very sharp".²⁰

¹⁸ G. Moens-Haenen "Vibrato" Grove Music Online
<http://www.oxfordmusiconline.com/subscriber/article/grove/music/29287?q=vibrato&search=quick&pos=1&start=1#firsthit> {accessed October 6, 2009}

¹⁹ Please refer to Jan Gippo, *The Complete Piccolo*, for a comprehensive fingering chart.

New piccolo players tend to underestimate the stamina that is required when adjusting to the smaller embouchure necessary when playing the piccolo. This often leads to overexertion and a profound exhaustion of the lips. It is therefore, very important to build stamina for playing the piccolo, consistently and gradually over time, by doing a little more piccolo practice each day.

Technical passages can first be learned on the flute then transferred to the piccolo. This particular technique, allows a player to learn the passage comfortably on the flute, before transferring it to the piccolo. In addition, a player is more likely to notice any intonation discrepancies once the passage is transferred to the piccolo, having already learnt the passage with the correct intonation, albeit, an octave lower.

It is also very important when practising the piccolo to consider appropriate room choice, as it is very easy to incur hearing loss. Playing in a compact studio or at high frequencies for long periods of time is very detrimental to hearing. According to the U.S Environmental Protection Agency, the recommended amount of noise exposure for no hearing loss is up to 85 decibels for eight hours a day over 40 years.²¹

The piccolo can produce up to 120 decibels of sound; this is another reason that piccolo practice should be limited to a small amount per day, unless the player utilizes appropriate earplugs.

As a musician, hearing is imperative. The practice of rehearsal in small or overly acoustically live spaces can be very damaging overtime to the player's hearing. As the

²⁰ Frederick Shade, Interview, 2009

²¹ Stephen Strauss, *Piccolo Peril* Article for the Globe and Mail, Toronto, May 18, 1996: <http://www.larrykrantz.com/hearing.htm> (accessed October 22, 2009)

choice of venue is often beyond the player's control; obtaining a quality set of musician's earplugs is a necessary and proactive health safety precaution.

Chapter III. – Selected works - a rehearsal guide, Part One

The works chosen for study are contemporary, Australian pieces that showcase the tone colour, range and various other strengths of the piccolo.. The selected works are as follows;

Eric Gross – *Pesky Piccolo*

Don Kay – *Dance Prelude*

Ross Edwards – *Ulpirra*

Barry McKimm – *Piccolo Concerto (Celtic Concerto)*

Michael Easton – *Concerto for Piccolo and Orchestra*

Pesky Piccolo is a short piece for piccolo and piano that reflects the piccolo's playful nature. It contains scalar passages, ornamentation and leaps between registers.

Although appearing simple, the piece requires great attention to detail with frequent tempi and dynamic changes.

The work begins with a D Major scale commencing on the low D of the piccolo. This low start is challenging in that low notes on the piccolo can be difficult to play with good tone and in tune when played softly, as Gross requires here.(see figure 4) Adding to the complexity is that the initial *piano* attack includes an accent.

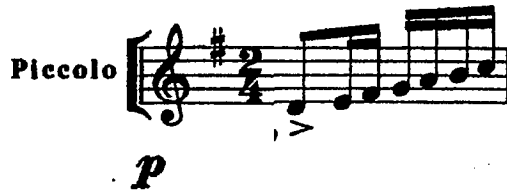


Figure 4. Eric Gross, *Pesky Piccolo*, Bar 4

The title of the piece *Pesky Piccolo* is reflected in the way Gross requires consistent intonation across the range of the instrument, particularly intonation between octaves. Gross challenges the performer by frequent octave leaps from D2 to D3 and also C2 to C3²², (see figure 5) which on most instruments tend to be pitch unstable between registers. The performer is required to know the instrument very well in order to accommodate for these adjustments, and to practice consistently with a tuner.



Figure 5. Eric Gross *Pesky Piccolo*, Bars 15 - 16

²² C/D 2 and 3 indicate concert pitch two or three octaves above middle C

Aside from intonation, the composer requires a high attention to detail. The player must be flexible enough and in control of the instrument in order to execute frequent dynamic and tempo directions, and to play them in tune.



Figure 6. Eric Gross *Pesky Piccolo* Bars 87 - 88

Figure 6 shows one example of the rapid dynamic and tempo directions given by the composer. Here, in the space of three semiquavers, Gross indicates the dynamic changes from *piano* to *forte* whilst executing a *poco rallentando* and back to *piano*. Gross also includes such directions as *subito lento* and an *accelerando* over the last six bars, which can prove a difficulty when rehearsing with the piano.

Dance Preludes by Don Kay is a new work written in 2008 and is a wonderful addition to the growing repertoire of works for piccolo and piano, in two movements *Ceremonial* and *Festive*.

In a conversation with the author in June 2008, Kay revealed that no-one had ever asked him to write for solo piccolo, and it had not occurred to him before. The work

Dance Preludes showcases the beautiful middle range and expressivity of the piccolo.²³

Ceremonial was written especially for the recital accompanying this exegesis in 2008 and features the middle and low registers of the piccolo.²⁴

Ceremonial contains some particularly difficult tempi and meter changes, adding to the difficulty when rehearsing with piano.²⁵

Meter changes in particular are the most rhythmically challenging aspect in the piece. Figure 7 shows the opening of the movement and features meter changes in each bar progressing from 6/8, 7/8, 3/4, 3/8 and 7/8.

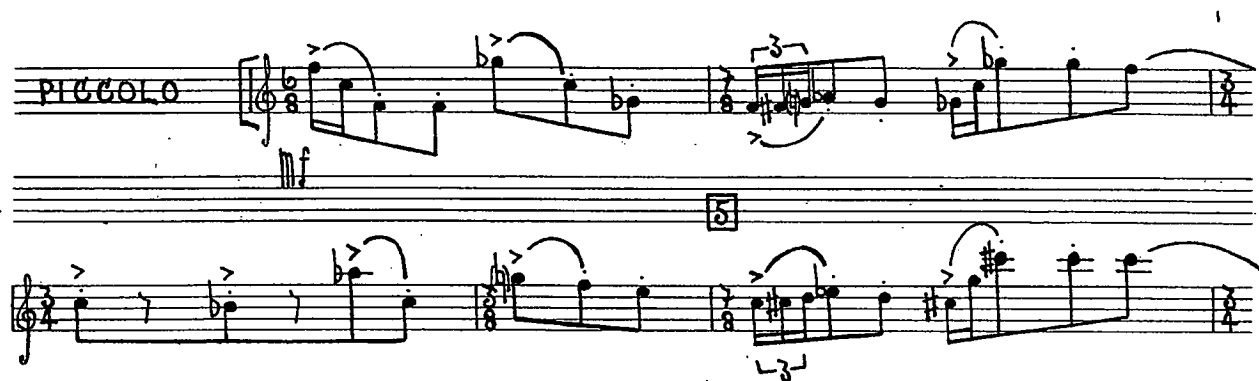


Figure 7. Don Kay, *Dance Preludes – Ceremonial* Bars 1-5

²³ Kay was approached by the author to enquire as to his composition for piccolo and amicably agreed to writing a piece for this particular study, showcasing the middle register of the piccolo.

²⁴ The second movement *Festive* was completed after the recital in early 2009; therefore this paper will only discuss *Ceremonial*.

²⁵ Please refer to CD number 2 for a recording of Don Kay, *Dance Preludes - Ceremonial*

Figure 8 shows another difficult meter change, this one occurring at bars 11 – 12. the composer advised that these were to be approximately double speed in feel i.e.: quaver equals quaver.

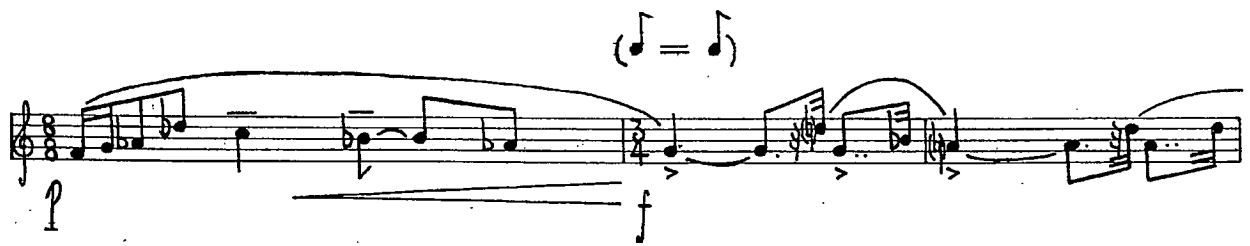


Figure 8. Don Kay, *Dance Preludes – Ceremonial* Bars 11-12

This particular meter change, while simple in principal proved to be difficult due to the performer counting in dotted crotchets. It was necessary to practise with a metronome at the quaver speed in order to execute these meter changes accurately.

Quintuplets are also a major feature in this work, giving the piece a somewhat improvised feel. These quintuplets provide technical challenges as the frequently change direction, causing the performer to quickly add and remove many fingers at a time between the D and C, for example bar 43(see figure 9).



Figure 9. Don Kay, *Dance Preludes – Ceremonial* Bar 43

It is important to ensure that all of these notes are heard, and no note is misplaced. When practising this particular element, evenness can be improved by breaking the section up and practicing the downward and upward sections separately, then together, focussing on the C.

Similarly sextuplets are a feature in this work, and also do not always run in the same direction, often reaching from D3 to E3 and back again, and seen in bar 28.(see figure 10)

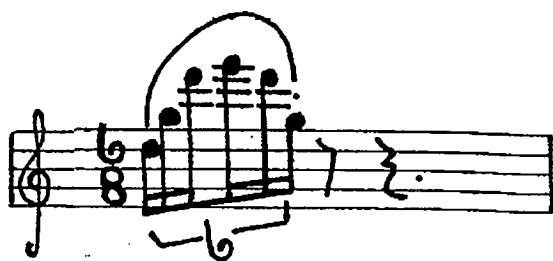


Figure 10. Don Kay, *Dance Preludes – C  remonial* Bar 28

The transition from D to E3 in this sextuplet can be difficult as it requires individual finger movement, particularly in the left hand: alternating downward finger placement of the third finger and first fingers. A suggestion to combat this problem is to practise D- E3 in sequence with a metronome, gradually building up speed over time.

Large leaps are also a feature of this work and it is important to ensure that all notes come out cleanly and are not split.

Ulpirra, by Ross Edwards is another short work that epitomizes the piccolo's playful nature.²⁶ Written originally for recorder, it has been republished for solo piccolo.

Like Kay's *Ceremonial*, *Ulpirra* features frequent meter changes throughout, including changes between 5/8, 3/8 and 2/4.. The use of irregular rhythms such as quintuplets, and a large amount of ornamentation gives the work an improvisatory feel.

In addition to these technical challenges, like the Kay and Gross, Edwards challenges the performer with large intervallic leaps, such as seen in bar 13, as shown in figure 11.

The quick nature of the lower note being marked as an acciaccatura, and the accent on the upper most note, add to the complexity of executing this leap efficiently and ensuring the note is articulated clearly.



Figure 11. Ross Edwards, *Ulpirra* Bar 13

²⁶ Written for any treble instrument it is most often performed on the oboe however, due to its playful nature featuring ornamentation and the pitch it is written at it is a perfect piece to showcase the piccolo's attributes.

Other technically challenging aspects of this work include the use of quintuplets ascending, but not in intervallic step. This can be seen throughout the work where in this theme the middle three notes of the tuplet are in intervallic step, but the outer notes use an interval of a third, as seen in bar 7 (figure 12).



Figure 12. Ross Edwards, *Ulpirra* Bar 7

When rehearsing this figure, it is important practise slowly, ensuring that the correct notes only are being played. Focussing on the transition from the B to the D, will assist as this is the most difficult, requiring the player to move more number of fingers at once.

A further example of the high use of ornamentation can be seen in the closing eight bars of the work (figure 13). Here, Edwards requires the player to execute intervallic leaps of thirds and sevenths.

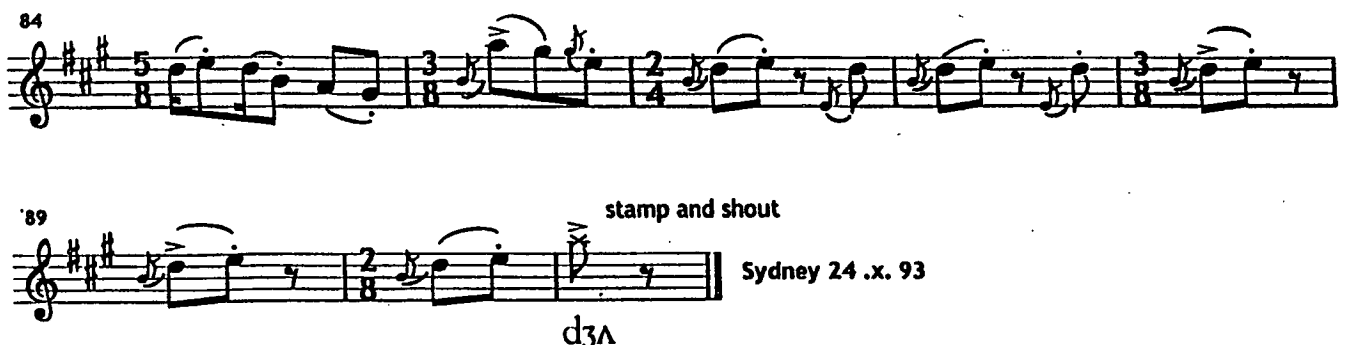


Figure 13. Ross Edwards, *Ulpirra* Bars 84-100

When practicing this passage, it is important to start slowly, and without the inclusion of the ornamentation. That way the player can learn where the placement of each note is without the fear of splitting the tone. Practicing the ornament in conjunction with the following note will have additional benefit. Once this is achieved at tempo, the full passage can be played.

Chapter IV. – Selected works - a rehearsal guide, Part Two

Barry McKimm was born in Melbourne, Victoria in 1941. His works include works for exotic instruments such as *Concerto for solo contrabass tuba and symphonic wind band*. Frederick Shade commissioned the *Piccolo Concerto* in 1983.

Shade has been instrumental in the commissioning of works for piccolo, or in his words the 'antisocial instrument'²⁷, and has had a huge part in putting the piccolo on the 'solo instrument' map. McKimm thought that composing a major work for 'such a wildly exotic orchestral instrument' would be a challenge. He concedes that he did not know what to do with it.²⁸

The piccolo has such a potent role within the orchestra, but it is also a limited role. Like most people, I was not aware of the low register, with its intimate beauty...The piano version was prepared and published by the composer in 1998.²⁹

The beauty in the low register of the piccolo that McKimm makes explores is one of the piccolo's most endearing, but underrated qualities. In the work, the solo line unique to the piccolo has a depth of sound that the flute in the same pitch range cannot express.

²⁷ Frederick Shade, *Life as a piccolo player* Published in The Flautist, March 200, Vol. 31 No. 1, Obtained from F. Shade's Private collection

²⁸ Barry McKimm, *Piccolo Concerto*, Ed. F. Shade, Barry McKimm 1998. P.O Box 30 Warrandyte, Australia 3113

²⁹ Barry McKimm, *Piccolo Concerto*, Ed. F. Shade

McKimm exploits this wonderful aspect of the piccolo's timbre throughout the work. It is the first sound heard. The opening of the first movement is scored for piccolo solo, based in the low to middle register (see figure 14).



Figure 14. Barry McKimm *Piccolo Concerto*, Ed. F. Shade – bars 1-4

He [McKimm] did his research. Playing to the strengths of the instrument is a result of his own listening, learning about the instrument and liaising with the performer.³⁰

During composition, Shade was consulted frequently by the composer. "Barry [McKimm] would come to me with the theme or section and enquire whether it was playable".³¹

Shade remarked that it was McKimm's practice to consult with colleagues when he was composing a work for them³², therefore, one would expect the printed score to be definitive of the collaborative effort. Shade however; in his recording with the Melbourne Symphony Orchestra³³ does take some intriguing liberties.

³⁰ Frederick Shade, Interview, 2009

³¹ Frederick Shade, *Piccolo Article for Flute Focus* Published in *Flute Focus* October 2005 part one, January 2006 Part 2, Obtained from F. Shade's Private collection

³² Frederick Shade, Interview, 2009

³³ Recorded in 1983

Most of these amendments occur in the first movement of the work. When asked as to why this came about Shade replied that McKimm had given him permission to put in some ornamentation after some discussion, particularly in the slow movement, and when to play the ornamentation on or before the beat.³⁴

In regards to the others, Shade comments;

The others [additions] were what I thought it needed. He [McKimm] allowed me to do that, but I knew that with him and the consultation that we had had, I didn't feel that I had unlimited scope.³⁵

³⁴ Frederick Shade, Interview, 2009

³⁵ Frederick Shade, Interview, 2009

The most interesting of these amendments can be found in bar 205 of the first movement where Shade doubles the glockenspiel line an octave higher. Figure 14 shows the transcription of added bars from bar 205 in the piccolo part as performed by Shade in 1983, whilst figure 16 shows the published score. Given the duration of the concerto, and in a movement of almost 10 minutes it is very interesting that Shade did not take those nine bars to rest, as written by McKimm. These nine bars rest are the second of only two substantial breaks in the movement where the performer can take a break.



Figure 15. Barry McKimm *Piccolo Concerto*, – Shade's addition commencing bar 205 transcribed by author

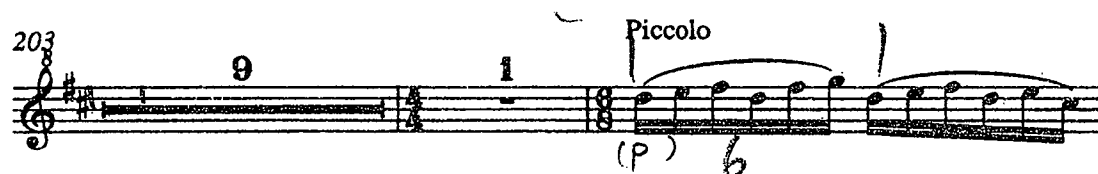


Figure 16. Barry McKimm *Piccolo Concerto*, Ed. F. Shade, Mov. 1 Bars 203 - 214

Shade also makes amendments earlier in the first movement in bar 21, adding a triad preceding a large pitch leap. Figure 17 shows the addition of notes in bar 21, made by Shade in order to get from the low G# to the high E, adding melodic interest and eliminating such a large leap.



Figure 17. Barry McKimm *Piccolo Concerto*, – Shade's addition bar 21 transcribed by author

Shade's amendments also include the raising of some sections up the octave, where the theme is repeated. This occurs predominantly in the first movement where, on presentation of the theme in the scored register, Shade plays the second half of the repeated theme up the octave (figure 18). The octave displacement adds depth, but also links the opening theme with the second theme that commences in bar 26, as the first theme ends in the same register as the next rather than an octave apart.

10

15

20

25

8va

3

mf

f

Poco più mosso a ritmico ♩ = 76

Figure 18. Barry McKimm *Piccolo Concerto*, Ed. F. Shade, Mov. 1, Bars 10 - 28

Shade's markings on the score also indicate sections of the work where dynamics were used to alleviate a particular problem. Like the flute, when executing rapid dynamic variations, the piccolo player needs to be very aware of intonation, especially when asked to perform *subito piano*. The composer calls for this effect in the first movement, where in bar 166(see figure 19), the dynamic marking is *mezzo forte* and on the key change the performer is required to move to *subito piano*. Here, Shade's marking indicates a crescendo in the bar directly prior to the *subito piano*.

This method gives the listener the illusion of moving to a much softer dynamic when it may not necessarily be the case, and allows the performer to keep the pitch from going flat, whilst still maintaining the composer's dynamic indications.

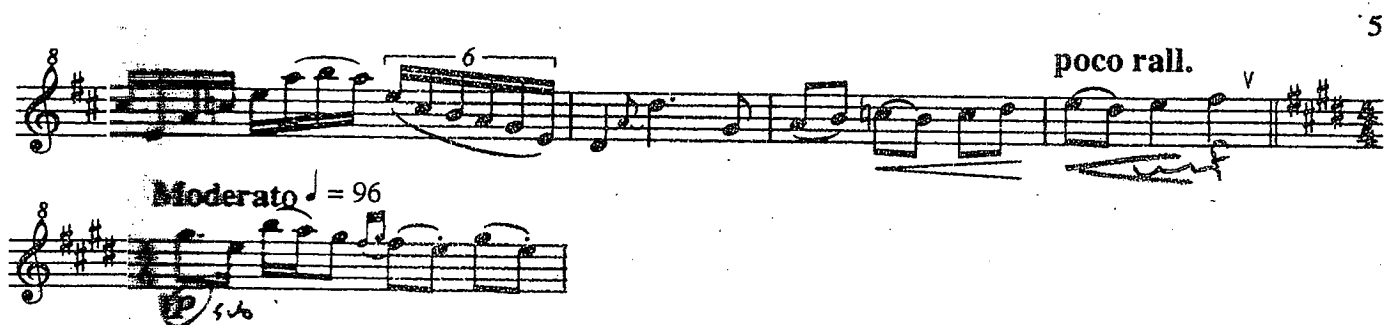


Figure 19. Barry Mckimm, *Piccolo Concerto*, Ed. F. Shade, Mov. 1, Bars 163 - 167

Rubato is an additional technique employed by performers to alleviate some technical issues. This technique gives the performer a little more room to execute the technical passage accurately and when placed in an appropriate place in the phrase (usually toward the end), also aids the listener to hear the conclusion of a particular melodic idea.

A common way to indicate rubato without writing out the words is to draw a wavy line underneath the passage, as can be seen in Shade's pencil marks in bar 271 (see figure 20).



Figure 20. Barry Mckimm, *Piccolo Concerto*, Ed. F. Shade, Mov. 1, Bars 369 - 272

Here, Shade not only makes room for the ornamentation in the bar, but perfectly places *rubato* prior to the recapitulation of the first theme which occurs in the following bar.

Shade recollects that the MSO was doing a regional concert series in Horsham, Victoria, when Mckimm presented the second movement to him, backstage in a dusty country town hall. Shade's delight at the original melodies, yet evoking a true Irish

sound, almost brought him to tears as he played it for the first time, remarking to the composer, the he [McKimm] was not to change a thing!³⁶

Shade's amendments to the second movement are not apparent, with the exception of the slurring of the first two opening quavers and a pause marking in bar 5 (see figure 21), indicating more of a phrasing amendment, than a change to the composition. The added slur allows for the *rubato* to be present, without the section being rushed and the pause allowing time for the audience to hear the conclusion of the solo piccolo theme, before adding the accompaniment.



Figure 21. Barry McKimm, *Piccolo Concerto*, Ed. F. Shade, Mov. 2, Bars 1 -3

³⁶ Frederick Shade, Interview, 2009

Michael Easton's *Concerto for piccolo and Orchestra* is another work commissioned by Frederick Shade, for the Melbourne Symphony Orchestra in 1986. Shade describes the composition process as receiving the complete work from Easton, as compared with McKimm, where each movement was presented separately for his approval with an invitation extended for any editing required to the piccolo part.

Shade describes both the composers' methods as entirely different: with Easton, Shade was not consulted in any way until the final composition was presented to him.

Michael Easton was so brilliant he could do anything, and so he just sat down and wrote it. Once the composition was finished it was presented to me and because Michael (Easton) and I were colleagues, I was given a certain amount of leeway when it came to minor alterations, particularly articulation.³⁷

Shade's contribution was not however, entirely unwanted by the composer. Shade recalls that Easton came to him with the work completed, minus a cadenza, and when Shade commented on the lack of cadenza, was invited by the composer to write one. Shade declined to write the cadenza however, and left it to the composer.

Easton's concerto is a three-movement work, and displays the piccolo's middle to low register and ease of articulation throughout. The Second movement also utilizes the timbre of the middle to low register of the instrument. The third movement is bouncy and lively in nature with contrasting soaring legato melodies, and rolling semiquavers.

³⁷ Frederick Shade, Interview, 2009

It features a sizable cadenza by the composer, with large intervallic leaps and glissandi.³⁸

Shade's performance copy indicates that his articulation modifications have been made for phrasing purposes.³⁹

As shown in the following examples (see figures 22 and 23), the slurring of the first pair of semiquavers in a group, gives balance and interest to a phrase that would be otherwise the same with and tongued articulation. This technique also gives the tongue a rest from a constant tongued articulation, and assists in the immediate sound production of low notes as seen in bar 27 (Figure 22), where the note may split if attacked too hard.



Figure 22. Michael Easton, *Concerto for Piccolo and Orchestra*, Ed. F. Shade, Mov. 1, bars 23-24

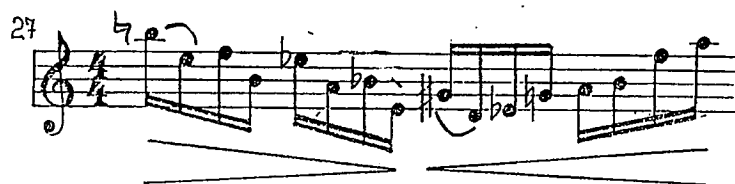


Figure 23. Michael Easton, *Concerto for Piccolo and Orchestra*, Ed. F. Shade, Mov. 1, bar 27

³⁸ Michael Easton, *Concerto for Piccolo and Orchestra*, Schirmer, Australia, 1986

Shade also amends a slur indicated by the composer over two notes of the same pitch, giving some space between them (see figure 24).



Figure 24. Michael Easton, *Concerto for Piccolo and Orchestra*, Ed. F. Shade, Mov. 1, bar 70

Another example of Shade's amendments affecting the phrasing and technique occurs at bars 89-90 (figure 25). Here it is necessary to take a breath in order to maintain the long trill scored in bars 91. Instead of sneaking a series of smaller breaths, Shade opts to end the phrase as indicated by the composer earlier in the movement as see in bar 3(Figure 26, following page), breathe, and then link the new part of the phrase and the upbeat, with a slur.



Figure 25. Michael Easton, *Concerto for Piccolo and Orchestra*, Ed. F. Shade, Mov. 1, bars 88-91

³⁹ See appendix C for full piccolo score



Figure 26. Michael Easton, *Concerto for Piccolo and Orchestra*, Ed. F. Shade, Mov. 1, bars 1-4

Similar articulation amendments also occur in the final movement.⁴⁰

The question was asked of Shade how he alleviated tone production and balance issues with the orchestra in regards to the preparation of the McKimm and Easton concertos for performance, particularly because in both concertos there are times where the piccolo is scored quite low in its' range. Shade's reply was to say:

The secret of that is to have a relatively good orchestra, and secondly, to have a sympathetic conductor. Both were the case with the McKimm, and the orchestra knew what was required.

That is important because there are in places (in the McKimm) where they (balance issues) are apparent. There are also places where we are screaming along, when we are not soloists, the orchestra actually takes over. That's what you have to appreciate in places in the McKimm. Then suddenly you find yourself on your own, and they're the challenging bits to actually take over.

With the Michael Easton, that was a hoot, because of the way it was written, it doesn't have the same sort of production problems.⁴¹

⁴⁰ See appendix C for full amended score.

⁴¹ Frederick Shade, Interview, 2009

When interviewed Shade was asked what he considered the major difference was between playing the piccolo as a soloist, and as a member of the orchestra. He replied:

With the orchestra, you are one of 100 players. No matter how prominent or important or essential you believe your instrument to be, you are one of 100 and one of 2 dozen different instruments, and so you have to come to terms with that, and that the composer determines when you enter and when you leave a section of the piece. It is something that you have to come to terms with. Just like a pianist who is accompanying, must have a different approach to accompanying a piece.⁴²

It is very important for performer to acknowledge the difference between performing as a soloist and an orchestral member. Shade went on to say that just because the piccolo may be scored an octave higher than the flute, does not necessarily mean that the piccolo should be louder.⁴³

⁴² Frederick Shade, Interview, 2009

⁴³ Frederick Shade, Interview, 2009

Summary

The purpose of this paper was to provide a brief history of the development of the piccolo and its construction, and to provide performance practice suggestions for piccolo practice in regard to the selected works.

Its second purpose was to provide documented evidence of the design flaws in relation to the intonation of the piccolo, and how a player might adjust to accommodate these flaws.

The interview with Frederick Shade, former principal piccolo of the Melbourne Symphony Orchestra, and the commissioner of both the piccolo concertos studied, revealed some insights in regard to the selected works.

The study in documented performance practice of these two works not been previously detailed between composer of the work and musician who premiered both works, and in the case of the McKimm the liaison between composer and musician that occurred during composition.

The amendments of the *piccolo concerto* by Barry McKimm, as discussed in chapter 4, the inclusion of these amendments as performed by Frederick Shade on the recording accompanied by the Melbourne Symphony Orchestra, conducted by Richard Divall, has also never been documented.

The author obtained a copy of the performance manuscript of *Piccolo Concerto* by Barry McKimm, with the amendments of Shade, and also a copy of the original

manuscript of *Concerto for Piccolo and Orchestra* by Michael Easton, with Shade's articulation amendments, neither of which have been formally published.

These manuscripts, are an invaluable resource for piccolo players undertaking either performance or research of these particular works.⁴⁴ This study provides not only the stylistic notation of the performer as discussed with composers, but also transcribes the performers' amendments not currently included in the published score.

From the interview with Shade, it has been established that the consultation process between composer and artist was different. In the case of Barry McKimm it was noted that the composer worked in direct consultation with the performer, with regard to most aspects of composition including melodic ideas and technical issues directly pertaining to the piccolo; In the case of Michael Easton, very little collaboration ensued: the artist was presented with the work at the end of the compositional process.

The author also questioned Shade in about the performance preparation required for both major works, including projection issues, and the difference between playing solo and in the wind section of the orchestra. This brought to light some issues in regard to the different styles of playing, including the necessity of blend in an orchestra, as opposed to having more tonal variety in a solo performance.

⁴⁴ Included in appendix B and C, with the Permission of Frederick Shade

Suggestions for further research

It would be beneficial to pose the initial survey questions to a wider selection of Australian piccolo specialists. A survey of a pedagogical nature could be administered to Australian flute and piccolo teachers in tertiary institutions.

It would also be beneficial to interview willing Australian composers in regard to the piccolo as a solo instrument, with the hope of increasing available repertoire.

Appendix A

Australian Piccolo Repertoire - Limited to solo piccolo and small ensemble.

Australian Piccolo Repertoire				
Piccolo Solo				
Composer	Title	Year	Available from:	Notes
Beath, Betty	Piccolo Victory	1982	AMC	Scoring unknown
Beilharz, Kirsty	Burnished	1995	AMC	Unaccompanied
Brophy, Gerard	Head:	1988	AMC	Piccolo. Bass Clarinet and piano
Brophy, Gerard	Tweak	1991	AMC	Unaccompanied
Carlson, Rosalind	Forest bell-birds	2004	AMC	Unaccompanied
Dench, Chris	De/plye	1987	AMC	Unaccompanied
Easton, Michael	Concerto for Piccolo	1986	AMC	Available in Full Orchestral Score, Piano Reduction
Edwards, Ross	Ulpirra	1993	AMC	Unaccompanied
Eldred, John	Elegy	199-	AMC	Piccolo and piano
Ford, Andrew	Mondrian	1993	AMC	Piccolo with metal percussion
Ford, Andrew	Les debris d'un reve	1992	AMC	Unaccompanied
Gross, Eric	Pesky Piccolo	2002	AMC	Piccolo with Piano
Gyger, Elliott	Lush	1993	AMC	Piccolo with piano
Holley, Alan	Govett's Leap	1999	AMC	Piccolo, Flute, Clarinet and String Quartet
Karski, Domenik	Inward	2004	AMC	Piccolo, Bass Clarinet and piano
Kats-Chernin, Elena	Third Re-Invention		AMC	Piccolo with Harpsichord
Kay, Don	Dance Preludes	2009	AMC	Piccolo with Piano
Koepke, Paul	Bergamask	198-	AMC	Piccolo and small orchestra
McAlley, Vaughn	Flute and piccolo concerto	199-	AMC	Flute, Piccolo and Orchestra
Mckimm, Barry	Piccolo Concerto	1983	AMC	Available in Full Orchestral Score, Piano Reduction
Mckimm, Barry	Air, from Piccolo Concerto	1983	AMC	Available in piano reduction, piccolo and harp
Nagorcka, Ron	Jennie and Gillian's Jig	2005	AMC	Piccolo Cello and Pipe organ
Schultz, Andrew	Spherics	1999	AMC	Piccolo, Cello, Piano, Percussion and Organ
Smetanin, Michael	Nontiscordardime II	1992	AMC	Unaccompanied
Tiutiunnik, Katia	Al'amut	1998	AMC	Piccolo, Bass Clarinet, Harp and Tubular Bells
Tiutiunnik, Katia	Hidayah	1993	AMC	Unaccompanied
Vines, Nicholas	Highland Lai	2007	AMC	Piccolo and Bass clarinet
Whiticker, Michael	Jellingroo	1999	AMC	Piccolo, Didgeridoo and cello

* AMC – Australian Music Centre

Appendix B

Barry McKimm, *Piccolo Concerto* Ed. Frederick Shade, c1998

This score has been
removed for copyright or
proprietary reasons.

2
Piccolo

Piccolo Concerto

*for Frederick Shade
Melbourne Symphony*

1st Movement

Barry McKimm

Appendix C

Michael Easton, *Piccolo Concerto*, Ed. Frederick Shade

This score has been
removed for copyright or
proprietary reasons.

page 1

Allegro (♩=116)

PICCOLO CONCERTO

Michael Easton

PICCOLO

2

2

Appendix D - Compact Disk Track Listings

CD 1 – Examination Recital October 29, 2008

Tracks:

Piccolo Concerto- Barry McKimm

1. Andante Arioso
2. 'Air'
3. Allegro Giusto
4. **Pesky Piccolo – Eric Gross**
5. **Dance Preludes- Don Kay Ceremonial**
6. **Ulpirra – Ross Edwards**

Concerto for Piccolo – Michael Easton

7. Allegro
8. Canzon-Andante
9. Rondo-Finale

Andante et Rondo – Franz Doppler

10. Andante
11. Rondo-Allegro con moto

CD 2 – Recording Project October 26, 2008

Name	Time	Album	Composer
Ulpirra take 1	2:00	Recording Project for MMus	Ross Edwards
Ulpirra take 2	0:48		Ross Edwards
Ulpirra take 3	2:00		Ross Edwards
Ulpirra take 4	2:06		Ross Edwards
Ulpirra take 5	1:57		Ross Edwards
Pesky Piccolo take 1	2:31		Eric Gross
Pesky Piccolo take 2	0:30		Eric Gross
Pesky Piccolo take 3	2:32		Eric Gross
Pesky Piccolo take 4	2:37		Eric Gross
Ceremonial take 1	0:36		Don Kay
Ceremonial take 2	0:49		Don Kay
Ceremonial take 3	1:10		Don Kay
Piccolo Concerto- Mov 1 take 1	3:02		Barry McKimm
Piccolo Concerto- Mov 1 take 2	3:17		Barry McKimm
Piccolo Concerto- Mov 1 take 3	2:17		Barry McKimm
Piccolo Concerto- Mov 1 take 4	1:16		Barry McKimm
Piccolo Concerto- Mov 1 take 5	0:31		Barry McKimm
Piccolo Concerto- Mov 1 take 6	3:20		Barry McKimm
Piccolo Concerto- Mov 1 take 7	2:43		Barry McKimm
Piccolo Concerto- Mov 1 take 8	1:40		Barry McKimm
Piccolo Concerto- Mov 1 take 9	0:19		Barry McKimm
Piccolo Concerto- Mov 1 take 10	0:48		Barry McKimm
Piccolo Concerto- Mov 2 take 1	1:14		Barry McKimm
Piccolo Concerto - Mov 1 take 1	1:17		Michael Easton
Piccolo Concerto- Mov 1 take 2	3:41		Michael Easton
Piccolo Concerto- Mov 1 take 3	1:39		Michael Easton
Piccolo Concerto- Mov 1 take 4	3:04		Michael Easton
Piccolo Concerto- Mov 1 take 5	0:29		Michael Easton
Piccolo Concerto- Mov 2 take 1	1:04		Michael Easton
Piccolo Concerto- Mov 2 take 2	3:59		Michael Easton
Piccolo Concerto- Mov 2 take 3	4:53		Michael Easton
Piccolo Concerto- Mov 2 take 4	0:21		Michael Easton
Piccolo Concerto- Mov 3 take 1	7:26		Michael Easton
Piccolo Concerto- Mov 3 take 2	0:45		Michael Easton

Appendix E

Interview Questions

- What do you consider to be the most valuable aspect of the piccolo as a solo instrument?
- How do you believe composers could more contribute valuable works to the repertoire?
- Do you have a repertoire/alternate fingering list of some description, and if so, may I have a copy?
- Why do you think the instrument is not exploited as much as some others as a solo instrument?
- What do you consider the most important thing to know as a piccolo specialist? I.e.: repertoire, orchestral repertoire/techniques, studies etc.
- What do you consider the major difference between playing the piccolo in an orchestra as compared to solo?
- How do you think piccolo players as a community can promote the instrument and increase repertoire?
- What advice or texts can you recommend for someone who is just starting out as a piccolo specialist?
- What repertoire, Australian and otherwise would you recommend?
- When preparing the McKimm and Easton concertos for performance, what was the most significant challenge and how was the remedied?
- What motivated you to change parts of the first movement (as transcribed) of the McKimm, and what value do you believe that brought to the piece?

- In regards to the commissioning of the works, what involvement did you have with the composers in the writing of the piece and to what extent were your ideas implemented?
- Were the composers aware of the piccolo's strengths and weaknesses or did they consult you on these matters?
- When rehearsing the concertos, how did you alleviate production over the orchestra when the piccolo is scored quite low?
- Were there any other aspects in regard to rehearsal of the concertos that you feel should be mentioned? Re: orchestra, personal practise techniques.
- Can you recommend any particular works on the history and construction of the piccolo?
- What brand/model of piccolo do you prefer and why?
- Do you have any other comments in regards to piccolo playing?

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